



"HOW I CLIMBED TO THE TOP OF MT. MCKINLEY"



Hudson Stuck, Who First Reached Highest Point on the American Continent, Tells of Hardships of Mountain Climbing Just South of Arctic Circle.

Wouldn't you like to be a mountain climber? How grand it would be to leave the city with all its dirt and smoke and climb to the heights where the sun shines the clearest and where the sky is of the deepest blue and the air is pure. From the summit you could look down on the world below, watch the storm creep up the valleys and see the glorious sunrises and sunsets. Since the days when William Tell pictures the beauties of the Alps, poets and prose writers have written volumes describing the wonders of the mountain peaks; but listen to the tale of Hudson Stuck, the first man to reach the topmost summit in all America.

"As we neared the top we breathed with increasing difficulty," he says. "When the sun sank below the horizon it became so terribly cold we suffered intense agonies. As the sun rose in the sky it became so hot it was almost unendurable. The reflection of the sun against the snow and ice struck our faces like a knife. Our nostrils and lips were cut and bleeding. We smeared grease and lampblack on our faces to protect ourselves from the reflected glare, but the protection afforded was only slight. "While our heads were roasting in the terrific sun our feet were freezing against the ice and snow. We had to rest every few steps because of the rare atmosphere which did not afford us enough oxygen to continue our labors. At last we reached the summit. I pitched headlong to the snow unconscious."

That was the finish of Stuck's remarkable race to the summit of Mt. McKinley last June. But the other parts of his journey were almost as rigorous. The trip to Mt. McKinley is an undertaking in itself that none but the bravest of men need attempt. The summit is 20,900 feet above the level of the sea. Unlike most great mountains which rise from a high plateau it rises from among a lot of smaller peaks and the climber must make the climb almost from sea level.

The trip to Mt. McKinley is made over terribly rough country. Streams must be forded and crossed. Mountain ranges must be scaled. Canyons must be bridged. Before the discovery of great quantities of gold in Alaska Mt. McKinley was unknown. The geographers of our time said that Mt. St. Elias was the highest peak in North America. The highest peak on the American Continent was in the Andes.

Miners crossing the great divides saw Mt. McKinley first. It was named in honor of President McKinley. Surveyors from a great distance with transits measured its height and found it was the king of all American mountains.

The Duke of Abruzzi came from Italy and scaled Mt. Elias, but with the discovery that Mt. McKinley was higher, it became the ambition of adventure-loving men to climb the higher peak. Parties set out from Fairbanks and after terrible privation found a trail to the foot of the peak. That took years. Belmore Browne lost his provision train of ponies in one of the attempts.

STUCK HAS THREE PARTIES. When the base finally was reached attempts were made to climb it. Belmore Browne and Prof. Herschel Parker came within 400 feet of reaching the top when they were forced to retreat.

"I started with a party of two white men and an Indian boy," says Stuck. "We made weeks of preparation for the trip. The weather was so bad that the average city man would be great peril in getting within striking distance of the peak. My men were all trained to hardships of the Northland and took hardships with uncomplaining fortitude.

"Then we began our dash for the top. Indeed, it was like a dash. Were you ever exhausted by running? Have you ever seen the race with a dash? As he comes in the finish he feels all the time he is exhausted. His muscles refuse to work, but his mind whips them on. Long before we reached the top we were in his condition. It got so finally our mind could not whip us to the top and we had to stop and rest until we could go on. "Mt. McKinley lacks only a few hundred feet of being four miles straight up in the air. Imagine yourself straight up four miles in the air and you can appreciate our difficulties. The air we are used to breathing is down near sea level. The great majority of the population of the world lives less than 1,000 feet above the sea. For generations we have accustomed our lungs to breathing air of almost sea level density.

"We were suddenly in air of ever decreasing density. At first the climbing was easy. The actual going up did not affect us. To men used to the rigorous life of the Alaskan frontier, climbing is nothing. It was climbing in rarified air that made our work difficult.

"Every time our barometer showed we had climbed 1,000 feet in height I took photographs of the mountain and the lay of the ground. Mt. McKinley lies close to the Arctic Circle and our ascent was made

ABOVE, two poses of Archdeacon Hudson Stuck, who first scaled Mt. McKinley. Below, Dr. F. A. Cook wreathed in roses upon his return to America after claiming to have discovered the North Pole, who was discredited by Stuck. Scenes of the climb up the mountain.



just before midsummer. Consequently the days were very long. As you know the sun shines twenty-four hours on the Arctic Circle in midsummer. "The short nights, however, were entirely too long. We could not carry enough to keep ourselves warm and we suffered intensely from the terrible cold. One of the things we had to prepare for was enough to eat. Browne and Parker failed of reaching the summit because they did not have enough to eat. The food had to be carried with us to the summit. As we neared the summit the labor of carrying the food together with the labor of continuing the steep ascent overtaxed us. "We finally had to carry our provisions in relays. First we tried carrying them in two relays, but we finally had to change to three relays. We would carry all we could to a certain point and then return for more. The third time we would carry the remainder. That made us do the final climbing three times. With slow steps we would finish our final trip and rest before starting on a new relay. "As we ascended the mountain peak we noticed differences from observations made by Browne and Parker. Our photographs did not agree with theirs. Then I remembered there had been an earthquake and the contour of parts of the mountain were greatly changed. Browne and Parker certainly were fortunate in not reaching the top. Had they done so they would have been caught by the earthquake and killed. They were far enough down the mountain when the earthquake came to escape unharmed. "As we walked our feet became numb. Had anyone remarked that his feet were freezing it would have meant the end of the trip, but all remained silent on the matter. Each thought he was the only one

suffering and resolutely refused to tell the others so as not to spoil the ascent.

AMERICAN FLAG AND CROSS ON THE SUMMIT.

"At last we reached the summit. After taking observations and photographs we raised an American flag on a pole with a cross on it and retraced our steps. As we went down the mountain we determined to ascend the north summit which is the one nearest to Fairbanks and is visible from Fairbanks. It is about 800 feet lower than the south summit. "What I wished to do was to verify a report of some miners that they had climbed to the top of that peak and raised a fourteen-foot pole there. These miners thought a fourteen-foot pole would be visible from Fairbanks, fifty miles away. When they planted the pole they descended and before they reached the foot of the pole they could not see the pole themselves. They told other miners of their ascent, but were laughed at.

"I knew these miners and knew they spoke the truth. I wished to champion them and that is why I was going to climb the north summit. Had these miners known it I believe they could have climbed the south summit and beaten me there. They knew nothing of scientific matters, but they had great

endurance and cared nothing for hardship. As we were preparing to ascend the north summit one of my companions, whose eyes were younger than mine, saw the pole. By the aid of a glass I, too, saw it and was able to verify that the miners did what they claimed."

Stuck is an Episcopal missionary to the interior of Alaska. His climbing the peak was done more as a vacation stunt than anything else. His trip proved that the hardy men can conquer where they determine to do so.

Stuck's training in Alaska, where he has exposed himself to all kinds of dangers and rigors of climate to spread the Gospel, made him peculiarly fitted to climb the peak. His scientific knowledge also was an important factor. He is Archdeacon of Alaska.

His climbing Mt. McKinley completely discredited the claims of Dr. Frederick A. Cook, whose book "To the Top of the Continent" was in his demand a few years ago, after he claimed he had climbed to the top of Mt. McKinley. Archdeacon Stuck says little or nothing about Dr. Cook's claims but his photographs and the facts he could not find Cook's records are evidence that Dr. Cook never reached McKinley's summit. To Browne and Parker, Stuck is

willing to give all honor for his work. Browne's story of his ascent is indeed a story of great privation. **POOR FOOD DEPRIVED OTHERS OF WINNING TOP.**

The food that they brought along was the real cause for their failure. Speaking of the trip he made to reach the top, Browne said:

"Both Professor Parker and La Voy had had difficulty in digesting our pemmican. They thought that the pemmican was not good, and I scoffed at the idea until we reached the 15,000 foot camp and then I was attacked by severe cramps. Now pemmican was the foundation on which we had build our hopes of reaching the summit, and if we found that we could not use it at high altitudes, we would be in a serious predicament. We decided to cook it at our next camp in the hope that it would be more digestible. During the night the wind began to moan among the rocks, and soon a gale was shrieking down between the two peaks. Mingled with the rattle of the gale we heard the lash of wind-driven snow. When we awoke next morning the snow was still falling and as we lay blissfully dozing in our fur bags, avalanches began to roar down into the glacial amphitheaters below us, until the very mountain seemed to tremble, and the sound swelled to the steady rumble of thunder. We were storm-bound all day."

As Browne neared the summit he found it was impossible to reach it, although they were only a few hundred feet from the top.

"While we could have reached the summit in clear weather in a half hour," he said, "we were afraid to face it in the present gale. With our glasses covered with ice and fearing to remove them on account of the cold, we were helpless, and could not see each other even when only separated by a few feet. The fact that our steps were completely wiped out added to our concern, for we realized how difficult it would be to find the narrow ridge where it joined the smooth dome a thousand

feet below us. After looking over our position, we decided to take the odds offered and try to ride out the storm.

"Having once decided on this course we set to work and soon chopped a small shelter in the hard snow. Our hopes were soon blasted, however, for after a few minutes of inaction we began to feel the numbing effect of the cold. The gale was driving the dry snow into every seam and pore of our clothing, and the heat of our bodies was turning the snow to ice. Our parkies were becoming stiff and the Wolverine fur on our parkies was frozen stiff from the moisture of our breath; our mittens were hard with ice and we held our ice axes with difficulty. Our position was an unique one as I do not believe there is a parallel case in the history of mountaineering. Had Mt. McKinley's summit been a peak we would have swung to the leeward snow slopes and claimed a first ascent. As it was, we were on the summit's edge and but for the extent and formations of this 'ridge-summit' we would have claimed the first ascent. We were in the position of a ship that had traveled a thousand miles to reach a certain city and had then been fogbound at the harbor's mouth. This much remains to console us: as far as the climbing was concerned we conquered Mt. McKinley—and when some day a party stands on the highest snow they will have followed our trail to the last dome. If it were not for this thought we would have to try again. The storm had now grown to a point where to face it required all our strength.

PARTY FORCED TO FLY FOR SHELTER.

"As I felt the cold creeping upward from my numbed hands and feet, I knew that it was dangerous to remain on the peak an instant longer, so I yelled to Parker and La Voy that we must get off the peak and get off quickly and that I would lead. The descent through the storm was the most exciting experience of my life. Everything depended on our finding and following the steps we had chopped, and the only way I could find them was by feeling for the soft spots in the snow. After what seemed hours, we arrived at a level spot above the first swell above the ridge, and a half hour later we saw dim rock shapes through the storm and realized that the ridge was found."

"With thankful hearts we halted to leeward of the highest rocks to rest, and as we continued downward to our camp the ridge protected us from the gale. Soon after our return the wind began to moderate, but the 'torments' on the summit continued for some hours. The following day dawned as clear as crystal, and all day long the summit stood clear-cut against the sky. We could not climb, however, for our moccasins, gloves, and outer clothing were impregnated with ice dust of the storm, and all day long we kept our axes, had stoves going and dried our duffie. We spent hours talking of the causes of mountain storms, and we all held fast to the theory that it was the effect of the sun on the atmosphere that caused the sudden savage gales that lashed the peaks until night dispelled them. Acting on this theory, we determined that our next attempt would be made before the sun had had a chance to warm the lower strata of air.

"Our inability to eat pemmican was a tremendous blow to us. It was not alone the weakening effect of our light diet that worried us, as added to this was the great waste of energy from having packed a food we could not eat, to a height of 17,000 feet, where everything in the food line was worth its weight in gold. Under our restricted diet we found that we were reduced to

four days' rations, whereas, if we had been able to eat pemmican, we possibly could have remained in the big basin a week longer. During our day of rest La Voy and I suffered acutely from snow-blindness.

"We saw we could not live on the mountain long, so we decided to hurry to civilization. We had to give up the prize to someone else. Alaska is a great country for the adventurer. The impression is general that the climate is unusually severe. Until recently life insurance companies refused to insure men who went to Alaska to live. There is no typical Alaskan climate any more than there is a typical climate in the United States. In the United States there may be below zero weather in Dakota and balmy weather in Florida. Alaska is just as varied. The Japanese current keeps the country relatively warm for its high altitude.

Along the coast the weather is rarely very cold. There are heavy snows and rains. Forests grow in the interior of Alaska and certain crops do well.

The railroad facilities are poor. The Yukon River affords excellent means of transportation in the summer. It is one of the largest rivers of America. The stream is very shallow, however, and will not admit deep vessels. Transportation by means of dog sledges and tonies is of great importance, of course. The government has introduced reindeer, but the native Alaskan and those who were drawn there in the nineties by the lure of gold believe strongly in the dog.

Alaska has wonderful forest wealth. The Chusach forest, with an area of 820 square miles, includes practically all the valuable timber in the Prince William Sound region. The Tongass forest has an area of more than 1,900 square miles. Along the rivers and all over Alaska to the south of the Yukon there is much time timber. Much of the timber is small, but it is valuable for local use as firewood and for building.

The mineral resources are remarkably extensive. The chief products are gold, copper and coal, but it is not unlikely that large deposits of other minerals will be unearthed in time. Last summer there were about 900 productive placer mines in Alaska with 4,500 men employed. At the same time there were more than fifteen deep gold mines and nine copper mines, employing 3,000 men. In addition, there probably were 5,000 men prospecting on their own hook or prospecting for others.

In 1892 Alaska entered the list of important mining countries when its gold production passed the million-dollar mark. Soon after the great wealth of the Klondike region was discovered. Then other mining towns sprang up. The Seward Peninsula produced gold in great quantities. Nome, on the bleak shores of the frozen sea, became an important mining town with 10,000 inhabitants, with two daily papers which sold on the street for 25 cents apiece.

The high cost of living had its birth in Alaska. Fifteen years ago nickels and dimes were too small to be noticed there. A quarter was the smallest piece and a dollar was more commonly seen.

The earliest gold production was in 1850 in the vicinity of Juneau. Since that time Alaska has produced \$200,000 in gold.

Copper mines are in the initial stage of development, but there are billions of dollars worth of copper in the land and the only thing that is needed is transportation to import machinery and to export copper.